sion. Moscow sh its vulnerable clients, particularly to Cuba. And the Europeans should know it would not be without cost to them were they to try to undercut American economic measures against a USSR that has invaded Poland: a French plane that lands in Leningrad under certain circumstances may be denied the right to land in Chicago.

What can we hope for Poland? Certainly that the Soviets do not invade and flood the country in blood. But much as it would not be for us to counsel the Poles in bravery, it's not for us to counsel them in timidity or even in restraint. The struggle against the Soviet heel is one we've decided against, but they live under it and not us. For years they have lived according to a political version of James Joyce's formula, "silence, exile, and cunning." They now may be eager to confront the brute directly, goad him on, and lay the truth of his rule out for all to see. And perhaps, by so doing, they may move closer in some way to defeating him and ending his terror. We should not dishonor their struggle by pretending it is against something more manageable and less onerous than those who experience it think it is. In a moving memoir of his own ideological journey, *In Quest* (Columbia University Press), the democratic radical sociologist and historian Sigmund Diamond recounts a conversation with a Polish intellectual in Krakow: "As for the United States, you are a great people, a generous people, but why are you so naive and gullible? How can you take Helsinki seriously?" That is a query that should haunt us for years.

White House Watch

Interim Jitters

Between Ronald Reagan's first and second visits to Washington after he was elected, the national and world news center was not the White House but the shabby downtown office building where his transition staff was quartered. A hundred and more reporters, cameramen, and technicians crowded every morning at 9:30 into a makeshift press room where Reagan's nominal Washington spokesman, Jim Brady, a veteran of Nixon and Ford administration news offices, had so little in solid information to offer that he jokingly apologized for not justifying journalists listing him on their lunchtime expense accounts. He and his principal assistant, Lawrence Speakes, who also served Nixon and Ford as a press officer, had trouble wangling time for reporters with the few senior transition officials who knew anything worth reporting. It didn't really matter for several reasons, the chief of which was that the national media, print and electronic, were absolutely determined to manufacture Reagan news regardless of how much basis there was for it. Neither by the resultant spate of speculative non-reporting. Reagan was made to seem uncertain, changeable, unable to attract the Cabinet talent that he'd promised to recruit, and the media made themselves out to be phony and silly. Much and maybe all of that would end when the Cabinet selections were announced, but in the meantime nobody, including the public, benefited from the interim jitters.

A secondary reason for the frantic preoccupation with Reagan was that the Carter White House and the Carter government plunged after the election into a quasi-coma so far as reported news went. It was a remarkable phenomenon, unprecedented in the transitions from one presidency to another that this reporter has observed since Roosevelt's and Truman's times. More actually was done and went on than was reported, and the neglect was more the media's than the administration's fault. Here was a President proclaiming himself, and repeatedly proclaimed by his elected successor, to be still the President-in-fact. He was struggling as best he could to bring the American hostages home from Iran, keep the Israeli-Egyptian peace process alive, avert the horrendous crisis that Soviet intervention in Poland would precipitate, and deal with the horrors of murder, extremism, and dissolution in El Salvador. Yet he was able to do very little about these problems, and minimal attention was paid to what he could do and tried to do. Journalists and the public were weary of Jimmy Carter and his doings and his people, crying in many muted ways, "Go, in God's name, go," and turning to the Reagan transition spectacle for relief.

Part of the spectacle became visible only in fragmentary reports of what was happening at the White House and the federal departments and agencies where Reagan transition teams moved in. According to the few spot checks that this reporter had time to make, things went quietly and well at the White House, the Treasury, several agencies. Things went roughly and poorly at State, Defense, and, according to news reports, at Agriculture and the CIA, among others. Pushy and abrasive transitionists, some of them patent self-servers and, in a few instances, industry lobbyists who never should have been on the teams, messed up some of the early relationships. In some measure, this resulted from over-manning and over-organization. Such senior Reagan transition officials as the Washington director, Edwin Meese III, and a fellow Californian, E. Pendleton James, the chief talent-hunter, professed to be extremely proud of the intensive pre-election preparations for Reagan's advent that occurred in secrecy in suburban Virginia. On the organization charts that appeared after the election, in the talk of personnel recruitment planned to the last conceivable detail, it is all very impressive. But there simply is too much of it, it puts too many people on the interim scene, and it makes Edwin Meese's task of coordination and control next to impossible.

The initial transition situations at the departments of State and Defense are instructive. At both departments, the Reagan operatives failed to foresee the difficulties that were likely to arise and did arise before the two department secretaries were chosen and announced. Thirteen transitionists under William Van Cleave, a hardline California specialist in national security and defense affairs, hit the Pentagon like an invading legion. Governor William Clements of Texas, a former deputy secretary of defense, persuaded incumbent secretary Harold Brown to let him install a retired admiral who'd worked for Clements and who set himself up as a one-man team. Obvious tensions between such pure Reaganites as Van Cleave and more moderate Nixon and Ford veterans under him compounded the confusion. Long-memoried officials recalled that two men, a fellow congressman and a congressional staffer, managed Melvin Laird's replacement of Clark Clifford in 1968. Harold Brown made do with a team of four transitionists in 1976. Now there were Van Cleave's 13, plus the admiral, plus what seemed to harried incumbents to be a swarm of additional advisers and interrogators. Some of them proved to be unauthorized freelancers and were called off after the department complained to Carter transitionist Jack Watson at the White House and Watson complained to Meese. A fundamental source of friction and bad feeling could be removed only after Reagan designated his secretary of defense. Van Cleave and his people demanded, and were refused, superclassified documents and information that Brown would provide only to individuals who were designated by the new secretary as incoming appointees and who could then be given the highest security clearance.

The situation at State was more relaxed but not altogether happy. Robert Neumann, the California academic who headed that transition team, and most of his people struck the Carter-Muskie incumbents as knowledgeable, reasonable people. Anthony Lake, the policy planning director who had headed Carter's DOS transition team in 1976, was determined to do what he could to make this transition as smooth and effective as he thought his own had been. So, one gathers, were Secretary Muskie and other State officials. But there were difficulties, personal and impersonal. At State as at Defense, such highly classified material as contingency plans and the like could be provided only after a new secretary had been designated and in turn had designated incoming subordinates who would be entitled to the necessary clearance. Aggravating leaks from the Reagan team culminated in the disclosure to the *New York Times* of classified reports from the Moscow embassy to the department on Senator Charles Percy's discussions with Brezhnev, Gromyko, and other Soviet officials. Richard V. Allen, Reagan's senior staff adviser on national security, publicly "deplored" and "lamented" this particular leak in remarkably mild terms, but he was said to have taken strong steps in private to rebuke the leakers and prevent a repetition. Here I'll note in passing that Allen, in my opinion, if appointed Reagan's national security adviser at the White House, will serve well as the low-key assistant Reagan says he wants. I'm glad that a critical *Wall Street Journal* story about Allen, and a warmed-over version of it in this journal, don't seem to have impaired Allen's standing with Reagan.

A transition team of 17 people has been assigned to the White House, including the immediate White House Office and the larger Executive Office of the President. Its director is James A. Baker III, who has been designated as Reagan's White House staff chief. His transition deputy is David Gergen, who was brought into the Ford White House by its staff chief, Richard Cheney (now Wyoming's congressman). Baker, Gergen, and their assistants are moving quietly into the Carter operation without, at this writing, upsetting anybody. The announced plans to run the Reagan White House with a duo—Baker as staff chief, Edwin Meese as a counselor with authority over Cabinet relationships and both domestic and foreign policy formulation—have aroused a lot of skepticism. There will be more when it's announced and realized that the Reagan directorate actually will be a triumvirate. Michael Deaver, a California publicist and Reagan intimate, is to be an assistant to the President and deputy to Baker. Deaver will have direct responsibility for a wide range of White House functions, including many that most directly affect the President. Richard Cheney, a wise and experienced White House survivor, has reviewed the plans with Meese and Baker and thinks the arrangement will work well.

THERE IS more, and probably better justified, skepticism over Reagan's talk of setting up an executive committee of four or five principal Cabinet members who would serve as a super-advisory council, maybe with offices in the White House or the adjoining Executive Office Building. Nixon tried something like that in 1972-73 after his reelection and it never even began to work. Caspar Weinberger, a prospective Reagan Cabinet secretary who would have been one of Nixon's elite, advocates a revival of the arrangement. Edwin Meese also plugs it, but with qualifiers suggesting that it may evolve into a more practicable committee of Cabinet seniors who meet intermittently with the President to discuss particular issues and problems. Something like that seems sensible and possible. It would leave the Cabinet members free to run their departments to the extent that any secretary can really run these monstrosities.

At the very start, incidentally, the secretaries and their principal subordinates will have their hands full attending the elaborate briefings and seminars that are planned for them. A good deal more than instruction in the ways of government and Washington is intended. The main purpose is to impress upon the secretaries and all their policy assistants that they have